



ROLES OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS IN INDUCING CHANGE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: AL AIN AS A CASE STUDY

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There is a strong relationship between the role of educational leaders (school principals) and inducing change in schools. Educational leaders are the change agents in schools and they can be tools for change or they can be barriers against change. Because of concerns about the employability and skills of the country's youth, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has undertaken considerable efforts to reform the education system. There are two new approaches presently being followed on a trial basis - a new standards-based curriculum in Abu Dhabi schools and a new English-medium curriculum in selected government schools, the Madaras Al Ghad (Schools of Tomorrow), across the UAE. Both approaches have given school leadership great priorities. This study was meant to investigate the role of educational leaders in tackling change in the UAE educational context. The researcher surveyed 40 principals and interviewed 10 persons in different educational leadership positions. The data was gathered and analyzed. The findings were discussed and the plan is to report to the policy makers in Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) to consider them when designing programs to prepare educational leaders for leading change.

Introduction

Essentially, schools that have improved have leaders that make significant and measureable contribution to the development of the school and the effectiveness of the staff.

Principals play a very important role in inducing change in schools, but actual knowledge on the most effective methods to prepare and develop highly qualified principals is spread. What are the essential strategies of good leadership? How can a successful principal lead teaching and learning? What are the principal's vital roles in curriculum development and implementation? How are successful leadership development programs designed? How can he/she lead the community?. The Roles of Educational Leaders in Inducing Change in Al Ain study, which is the basis for this book, was a major research effort commissioned by the researcher to answer these questions.

The study was motivated by two key premises: first, Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) is, of all means, sparing no effort to get the education outcomes in Abu Dhabi Emirate reach the international standards. ADEC has realized that high-quality teaching and learning for all students depends substantially on effective school leadership—that is, leadership that promotes and sustains learning gains for students, teachers, schools, and districts. Second, the principals in Al Ain schools have enough potentials, initiatives, and motivations, if triggered, that enable them to induce and lead change.

The purpose of the study was to identify effective ways of developing strong school leaders who are equipped to create effective learning environments for the Emirati diverse student populations.

This study examined the understanding, perception, and attitudes of the principals in Al Ain schools and what roles they can play in having change accomplished. Based on the findings of the study the researcher developed five key areas that can be the main focus of leading Al Ain principals to lead schools effectively. The five areas are: 1) leading strategically, 2) leading teaching and learning, 3) leading curriculum development and implementation, 4) leading professional development, and 5) leading the community.

Results from this study have been offered to decision makers and academics, including a literature review that provides an overview of current trends in principal preparation and professional development, in addition to an in-depth description of each applicable program.

While there are significant gaps in knowledge about how most effective to prepare school leaders and how to develop policies that support such programs, there is considerably more research on what contemporary principals need to know and be able to do. In this section, we describe this research and the criteria we used to evaluate the programs.

Educational leaders go even further in their efforts to redirect the school by changing the context and sense of purpose surrounding instruction and learning. They influence members indirectly by, for example, promoting people's engagement in a common vision, increasing their commitment to their work, creating a context that fosters risk taking and learning, and developing processes for shared decision making.

Educational leaders are expected to adopt transformational leadership to predict organizational learning and change. This includes:

- Setting direction by cultivating a shared vision and compelling goals
- Designating a trusting and caring work and learning culture
- Holding high performance expectations and developing individuals through direct and indirect support.
- Developing the institutional conditions (structures, processes, culture) to facilitate teaching and learning
- Developing collaborative decision-making structures
- Engaging parents and the community in school improvement

In this context, no one can deny that any nation, throughout the world, can not proceed in development unless education is associated. Education is the vehicle by which a country can have any effective change. Thus, all education policy makers, in the 21st century, have realized the urgent need to do education reform to equip the new generations with the ability to compete globally. Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) has created a vision that purposefully serves this goal.

The vision of ADEC, as reflected in Abu Dhabi Policy Agenda, is to build an education system that provides young people with the knowledge and skills needed to participate more fully in the Emirate's economic and social life, and compete in the global marketplace. At the forefront of these changes are the school principals and vice-principals. We know that effective school leadership is essential to ensure successful educational reform that improves student learning within improved schools. ADEC is committed to ensuring that it has strong principals and vice principals with the skills and talents needed to lead our school communities within the mandate of our new strategic plan. To improve the capabilities of our school principals and vice principals, ADEC has begun the implementation of a school leadership program to provide an orientation and ongoing training on effective transition into ADEC's New School Model.

Statement of the Problem

Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) has started a ten –year strategic plan to reform education in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. ADEC's strategic plan is part of Abu Dhabi economic plan that is aiming at

preparing the student to be active citizens in their society and to be able to compete internationally. To achieve that goal, ADEC has started the reform with preparing educational leaders to lead the change. Most of these educational leaders still need to understand what is meant by change, what their roles in change are, and how they can lead change

“This study investigates the effect of principals’ understanding of their roles as educational leaders on inducing change in the educational setting in Al Ain.”

Research Questions

1. Do educational leaders in Abu Dhabi schools understand their roles as change agents?
2. What roles should educational leaders play in leading successful change?

Significance of the Study

The rationale of this study is that, as stated by Lunenburg .F (2006), schools are only as good as their principals. Educational leaders have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment (Lunenburg, 2006). So, this study was meant to refine principals’ understanding of their real roles at different levels in inducing change.

This study sets a plan for school principals and guides them to lead the whole school change as it addresses four standards in educational leadership-strategic leadership, organization leadership, teaching, and learning leadership, and community leadership.

Also, the findings of this study are of great importance for the decision makers in Abu Dhabi Education Council (ADEC) as it can be considered when setting any Professional development programs for educational leaders.

Key Terms

Educational Leadership – Strategic Leadership – Organization – Teaching – Learning – Community – Stakeholders

Limitations of the Study

1. The chosen sample was limited as it included principals in Al Ain only. Other zones or Emirates are not included.
2. The sample was chosen from the government schools, it did not include private schools
3. The sample chosen for the study is (principals from Al Ain Education Office), so the results cannot be generalized to other principals in other areas in the World.

Literature Review

This section of the study will address the issue of the roles of educational leaders in two parts. Part one we will tackle the issue from our point of view based on our experience and on the observation of the current changes being implemented in Abu Dhabi Emirate schools under ADEC. Part two addresses previous studies related to the same issues.

Part I

Roles of Educational Leaders

There are many roles that are expected from the educational leaders at all levels. These roles can be outlined as: leading strategically, leading the organization, leading teaching and learning, and leading the community. In the following sections, we will discuss these roles in detail with reference to what is expected from the educational leaders to act in each role.

I The Principal and Strategic Leadership

Developing a School Vision

To create a vision statement is a great asset to organization. Fundamentally, a vision statement takes into account the current status of the organization, and serves to point the direction of where the organization wishes to reach and accomplish. The second task the principal should do after creating the school mission, is the development of a vision. “Who should develop the school vision?” is a very critical question that needs an answer from the principals. Frankly speaking, as I was touring Al Ain schools to interview principals, I have been told that very few of them are still convinced that it’s the principal’s role to develop the school vision. However, all literature reviews have highlighted the ‘shared vision’ notion—that’s to say all the school faculty should participate in the school vision. Yet, it is the role of the principal to pull the entire faculty to work collaboratively to develop a shared vision statement for the school. A vision of a school is an attempt to describe the school that teachers are hoping to create. It’s a picture of what this place is about: what the school looks like; how the pieces fit together, and how the people fit in where the school is trying to go—not just where it is now; not just a particular goal for the future but a sort of here’s how the school looks like now, Lunenburg, C. (2006).

The principal has critical roles in developing the school vision. He/she is key in leading the process of creating the school shared vision. In identifying standards for school leaders, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) has identified six standards. Standard One states, “A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.”, Reinhartz, J., & Beach, D., M. (2004).

Lunenburg, C. (2006) suggests some tips for developing a school vision: *a*) Engage the faculty in a general agreement about what they hope their school will become, *b*) enlist a faculty task force to identify the major findings of research studies on school improvement, *c*) share the research findings with the faculty, and *d*) conduct a small group discussion sessions that enable the faculty to review the research and discuss their hopes for the future of the school.

With the shared vision and with working with all the stakeholders, the principal can discover, invent, and create all structures, policies, and processes that enable the school to move in the right direction. It should be noted that although the principal remains a valued participant in the development of a vision, “vision” is embodied by the process rather than by “individuals” Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley (1991). Excellent is a moving target; therefore, the vision should be visited periodically to ensure that it remains relevant. The principal, in a sense, is viewed as the vision keeper.

Creating a School Mission

For any school principal, the first stride he/she needs to think about is to create a mission statement that identifies the purpose of the school. Teachers should ask themselves a very important question ,namely :

what is our mission, essential purpose as teachers? An example of a school mission could be: to identify proven strategies to teach children how to learn and acquire knowledge. Such statement captures something school staff can hold in their minds and hearts as they perform their duties. It begins to affect the day-to-day teaching and learning that happen.

In order to have the mission statement relevant, the principal must engage the faculty in a deeper discussion; for instance, why do we exist? Usually the answer could be that we exist to help all children to learn. For example, successful professional learning communities believe that all learners can learn. This statement will become meaningful if the school staffs are willing to engage in some deeper questions. For example, if the teachers in the school believe that all students can learn, they expect them to learn. How will react if students do not learn?

Hammond et al., (2007) emphasize the significance of stating the school mission and involving the staff in a shared mission and vision:

Finally, we found that the programs' strength was often a product of strong relationships between local school systems and universities, with a clear focus on a shared mission and a specific vision of instructional reform at the center of the work, (P.64).

Establishing Goals

To achieve the school's vision, school stakeholders have to establish goals based on the adopted value statements. Typically goals are the results that any school tries to carry out (Locke & Latham, 1995). This definition has the implication of at least three relationships between the goals and the principals. First, goals represent the implementation phase of school improvement. To determine the school goals is primarily the responsibility of the principal. Second, goals are affected by the aspirations of a school district's key administrators. Third, goals reflect a desired end result of school actions-what they wish to accomplish. It is important when forming goals not to confuse means with ends.

To establish goals is of great benefits for all stakeholders as this fosters commitment, provides performance standards and targets, and enhances motivation (Drucker, 2004).

Commitment. Goal statements describe the school's purpose to stakeholders. Getting all the participants agree to pursue a specific goal gives them personal stake in the outcomes. So, goals encourage personal commitment to group results.

Performance standards. Usually, goals define the planned outcomes. Thus, schools need to establish specific standards to appraise performance.

Targets. Targets are provided to principals by goals. Furthermore, they direct the collegial efforts toward the given outcomes.

Motivation. Goals, without doubt, provide the staff to perform at their highest levels. Moreover, goals give principals a rationale basis to reward performance.

Developing Value Statements

When researching successful leaders, Deal and Peterson reported, "We found a clear and focused sense of values to be a critical factor among successful principals we studied." Robert Eaker adds, "Monitoring or paying attention is a key vehicle for communicating the values of the school. Monitoring will only be truly effective when the school's key values become the focus of monitoring efforts." He further points out that "Modeling is the way leaders 'advertise' their personal values—and the central values around which the organization operates. All too often school officials espouse certain ideals and beliefs but then pay attention to other things. Students and faculty learn what is truly valued in a school by observing what school leaders pay attention to."

As a result, any assessment of a principal's effectiveness in communicating values should include the following questions:

1. What does the principal plan for?
2. What does the principal monitor?
3. What does the principal model?
4. What does the principal reinforce through recognition and celebration?
5. What behavior is the principal willing to confront?

Promoting Professional Learning Community (PLC)

"A learning community is a group of individuals who share a similar vision of educational values" (Zepeda, 2008, p.80)

A collaborative leader usually creates a sustainable advantage, develops a succession plan, and can lead to long-term positive consequences for staff, students, and the community. Leadership makes differences. As Sparks (2005) states,

Leaders matter. What leaders think, say, and do—and who they are when they come to work each day—profoundly affects institutional performance, the satisfaction they and those with whom they interact derive from their work, and their ability to sustain engagement with their work over the period of time necessary to oversee significant improvements.

The educational leader can lead discussions by asking questions, making observations, or making requests. The main task of the educational leader is to pull all the staff together to learn from each other and keep everyone moves toward the same direction.

Building Institutional Culture

Prior research has shown that leaders influence classroom outcomes through two primary pathways. The first pathway involves leadership practices that directly influence teaching and learning, for example, through the selection, support, and development of teachers. The second includes activities that indirectly influence practice by creating organizational conditions in the school that are conducive to positive change. Each of these pathways has been linked to important student outcomes.

Instructional leadership has critical practices—with both direct and indirect effects—involves:

- Working directly with teachers to improve effectiveness in the classroom, through evaluation, supervision, modeling, and support
- Providing resources and professional development to improve instruction
- Coordinating and evaluating curriculum, instruction, and assessment
- Regularly monitoring teaching and student progress
- Developing and maintaining shared norms and expectations with students, staff, and families in the school

Together, these activities, which aimed squarely at improving classroom teaching and learning, are key components of instructional leadership. The concept of principal as instructional leader stands in sharp contrast to traditional images of school administration, which emphasize the leader's role in maintaining discipline and bureaucratic order. Moreover, whereas traditional conceptions would select for principal candidates who seem well positioned to maintain order, instructional leadership places a premium on instructional qualifications.

II. The Principal and Leading Teaching and Learning

Educational leaders should have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all learners by encouraging a positive school culture, providing an effective educational program, implementing best practices to student learning, and designing inclusive professional growth plans for staff.

Encouraging Teacher Reflection on Instructional Planning

Instructional planning should be a self-reflective tool to promote successful instructional planning as this will result in a lot of benefits. These benefits can be outlined as:

- Providing a daily map for teachers
- Targeting learner benchmarks
- Ensuring that teachers follow up on identified weaknesses
- Reinforcing teachers' understanding of content knowledge
- Connecting with the curriculum alignment process

In addition, promoting reflective planning helps principals to identify any struggling teacher concerning goals, objectives, instructional activities, assessment, revision, and implementation and consequently, they (the principals and the struggling teachers) can work together to settle these issues.

Ensuring Effective and Flexible Teaching Practices to Meet Individual Learning Needs

Researches and studies assure that teachers have the greatest influences on children's education. The quality of the teacher is the most significant factor of student's success. Thus, it is the responsibility of the principal to hire (if the system gives him/her this authority) the best teachers and lead them on the campus to ensure effective teaching practices.

Lunenburg (2006) put down twelve principles of effective teaching:

1. Students learn better in cohesive and caring communities.
2. Students learn more when most of the offered time is allocated to curriculum linked activities, and when the classroom management system focuses on maintaining the students' engagement in those activities.
3. All components of the curriculum are aligned to create an organized program for carrying out instructional purposes and goals.
4. Teachers can equip students for learning by providing an initial structure to clarify planned outcomes and cue desired learning strategies.
5. To facilitate momentous learning and retention, content is explained clearly and developed with emphasis on its structure and connections.
6. Questions are planned to engage students in sustained communication structured around powerful ideas.
7. Students need enough opportunities to practice what they have learnt and apply it to get improvement-oriented feedback.
8. Teachers provide what assists students to engage productivity in learning activities.
9. Teachers and instruct learners in learning and self-regulation strategies.
10. Pair and group works are beneficial for students to construct understandings or help each other master skills.
11. Teachers use different types of formal and informal assessment methods to monitor progress towards learning goals.
12. Teachers establish and follow through on appropriate expectations for learning outcomes.

It is the responsibility of the principal to follow up and monitor all these principles being implemented on site.

Using Student Data in Instructional Planning

A good data system is not enough: Use of data to inform instruction needs leadership and systemic realignment. Data-driven decision making needs leader initiative to align curriculum and evaluation practices, professional development, and data systems.

An educational leader needs to gather evidence on curriculum and instruction. Then, an action plan should be set to document the activities for improvement. The action plan is facilitated by the principal and developed by teams of teachers. It should include;

- Particular goals or objectives based on data or evidence
- Link to the vision and mission of the school
- Activities to carry out goals and objectives
- Persons and their assigned responsibilities
- Timelines to specify time for each activity
- Skills, standards, and benchmarks needed to be reached
- An evaluation plan to assess progress

Ensuring All Students Receive Effective Teaching and Learning

Establishes creative, responsive and effective approaches to teaching and Learning through:

- training and assessing the quality of teaching to develop professional teachers
- improving student achievement through use of quality data
- monitoring and training teachers in new educational methodology/pedagogy
- providing a stimulating educational environment
- and allowing lead teachers to influence by example.

Conducting Formative and Summative Assessment and Aligning that with the Curriculum

Both formative and summative assessment can be of great importance for both teachers and principals. On one hand, and according to Brown and Irby (2001), formative evaluation provides the principals with an opportunity to discuss teachers' instructional progress with them. Of course, during this stage, the principal can provide teachers with assistance and clarification. On the other hand, the summative evaluation is a time for additional growth, renewal, and planning. This could be through reflection, mentoring and self-assessment.

III. The Principal and Leading the Organization

In the previous section, leading teaching and learning has been highlighted, but according to Louis & Kruse, (2000) and Sharp & Walter, (2033), management is important in addition to instructional leadership. When change occurs, the core roles of the principals are to:

- Ensure that resources-money, time, human resources, and professional development- align with the instructional goals.
- Support and facilitate the professional growth of teachers in a variety of interconnected methods.
- Include teachers in the information circle.
- Promote strong relationship between the school and the community.

- Manage the day-to-day tasks of running the school.
- Establish effective working groups.
- Also, school leaders are to promote shared leadership, management, and decision-making by:
- Organizing groups from staff parents and students (lead teachers, coordinators, student council, and parent council).
- Providing working groups with motivation and support.
- Delegating decision making to the working teams and groups.
- Encouraging and provides time for all groups to communicate in the school.
- Guiding a good financial management
- Distributing leadership roles and responsibilities according to working groups competency
- Monitoring group feedback

All these aspects are viewed as a management task that should involve attention to problem solving within the school.

For successful organizational leadership, we have to discuss some basic concepts: job description, delegation, decentralization, and departmentalization.

a. Job Description

Job description means roles, duties, responsibilities expected from each individual in the school. Principals, vice principals, secretaries, social workers, teachers, and other staff should all know their job description. And again, it's the principals' responsibility to ensure that knowledge of job description. The contribution of individuals will lead to improving the school outcomes and enhancing students' instruction.

b. Delegation

Delegation is the process to transfer authority from one position to another or from one person to another within the school. However, delegation does not mean reducing the authority or responsibility. The process of delegation has three steps: 1) The principal assigns the *responsibility*. For example, the principal asks the vice principal to prepare an enrollment program. 2) The principal gives the *authority*. The principal authorizes the vice principal to access the enrollment data. 3) The principal requires *accountability*. The vice principal incurs responsibility to do the task assigned to him/her by the principal.

c. Decentralization

Decentralization is the systematic distribution of power and decision making all over the school or organization to lower –and middle - level leaders. It is different from delegation in that in delegation certain tasks are assigned to certain people in the organization. However, decentralization needs coordination from the top, namely, the principals. Decentralization is of great value to the school as it can help a school carry out its planned goals successfully.

d. Departmentalization

Once the whole task of a school is separated into specific jobs, these jobs must be grouped into some logical organizational units such as teams, departments, or divisions- this concept is defined as departmentalization. Departmentalization can create many functional advantages to a school. It can bring together people performing the same and closely related activities. It can make decision making and coordination easier. Heads of faculties (as ADEC plans to implement this system in the coming years) can develop narrow skills and professional development programs. It can help personnel develop technical viewpoints. Principals must promote departmentalization as it facilitates their roles in having change occurred.

Of course the well understanding and implementation of these basic concepts will lead to effective and successful school leadership especially if the principals are working on change and reform of education.

IV The Principal and Leading the Community

An educational leader often promotes the success of all students by collaborating with parents and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources (CCSSO, 1996).

Leaders must create environments in which parents and community members feel valued, welcomed, and esteemed. More particularly, leaders must be able to create environments in which parents with ethnic, language, cultural, or academic backgrounds, different from the school staff, feel valued, welcomed, and appreciated. In successful schools, parents who could not speak English are greeted in their native language (Arabic) and provided regular communication in a tone that make them feel valued. In successful schools, parents who work during the day are provided opportunities to learn about their child's progress at school in a manner that respects their work schedules. In successful schools, parents who do not have college degrees or strong academic skills are given clear, practical, easy-to-use information about how they could support their child's learning at home (Scribner & Reyes, 1999, p. 193). In successful schools, leaders create environments that are both physically and socially warm and welcoming to parents and community members. For example, a school can place park benches outside classrooms to provide a comfortable waiting place for parents. Another offers parents a warm greeting and a cup of coffee when they enter the school's main office. In both of these schools, parents receive clear, accurate information about student progress, building their confidence that the school is working hard to improve achievement for their child (Johnson et al., 1996, p. 10).

Educational leaders must have the knowledge and skills necessary to create school environments in which students, parents, volunteers, teachers, and support personnel feel welcomed, esteemed, and appreciated. Both children and adults in successful schools reported that their schools operated more like families than institutions (Johnson et al., 1996, p. 9). Even with rigorous focus on the improvement of academic instruction, considerable attention was paid to creating an environment within which people felt like they belonged.

One important role of the educational leaders is to develop productive partnerships with external agencies, industry and commerce. The principals and educational leaders are expected to establish connections with all the stakeholders. They should establish transparency at school level to enhance communication and development that foster and strengthen all the stakeholder relationship. In addition, the educational leaders should seek opportunities for joint project and/or sponsorship.

Another part of the crucial roles the educational leaders is to liaise with agencies, organizations and ministries for well-being of students and families and for effective transition of students between grades, cycles and other institutions.

A third role of the educational leaders is to establish open and honest communication with wider parents' involvement. They have to develop the school vision, student learning and project initiatives, and to involve parents in school programs and plans such as classroom support, and libraries. They must gather feedback from parents and community on a regular basis. Moreover, they have to use strategies which encourage parents to participate and support their student's learning

Part II

Previous studies Related to the Research Issue

According to Michael Fullan and Mathew Miles (1999), successful change needs seven basic themes that need to be contemplated together. These themes are: 1) change is learning; 2) change is a journey not a

blueprint; 3) problems are our friends; 4) change is resource hungry; 5) change requires the power to manage it; 6) change is systematic; and 7) all large-scale change is implemented locally. So, educational leaders need to be aware and comprehend these seven themes in order to accomplish successful change. Fred C. Lunenburg (2006).

In addition, Lumby, Crow, & Pashiardis (2008) focus on the reality that educational leaders need to consider the picture of culture within educational leadership internationally. Also, Mark Wasserberg (1999) (*Living Headship: voices, values and vision*) drew the attention of educational leaders to the reality that vision starts from core values.

Transformational leaders stimulate others to do more than they originally plan and often more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically reach higher performance, John West-Burnham (2009). All in all, inducing change in the Emirates educational setting in general and in the schools of Abu Dhabi in particular requires the educational leaders to be knowledgeable about their roles. This will lead to successful and transformational change.

Leadership in school improvement is valued and acknowledged. Emphasizing this reality, Alma Harris quotes (2002) quotes (West *et al.*, 2000:36):

Essentially, schools that improve have leaders that make significant and measureable contribution to the development of the school and the effectiveness of the staff.

Mark Hadfield (2003) noted that the school leaders have to involve four main components when conducting school change. Building capacity for whole school improvement involves bringing together four core components: resources, structures, culture, and the skills of staff.

Methodology

After obtaining written consent from Al Ain Education office, the researcher will begin assessing principals' understanding of their roles as educational leaders.

Population

Al Ain Education office supervises 128 public schools-including KG, Cycle 1, cycle 2, and cycle 3 schools of both genders boys and girls. <http://www.adec.ac.ae/arabic/pages/Schools.aspx>

Sample

A number of 40 principals were surveyed and interviewed. The principals were chosen randomly i.e. principals from male and female, KG and primary, and preparatory and secondary schools.

Instruments

- A survey including 20 close-ended items was administered to accomplish the purpose of the study. In tabulating principals' responses the researcher evaluated each questionnaire item as follows: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, U = Uncertain, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree
- An interview was conducted with 10 principals (from different cycles-KG, Cycle 1, Cycle 2, Cycle 3, boys and girls) was conducted. The interview discussed the main issues around principals' roles in inducing change.

Data Collection

The researcher went directly to the schools to meet the principals and explain to them how to complete the surveys. The researcher left the surveys with the principals to take enough time to complete, then after one or two days(as agreed) he went back to collect them.

Data Analysis

Using the statistical analysis assistant program (SPSS) and the MS Excel program, the results of the questionnaire will then be computed (Gay, 2009, pp. 175-192).

Discussion and Findings

As mentioned earlier in the introduction, the study focused mainly on four areas: 1) the principals and strategic leadership, 2) the principals and leading the organization (school), 3) the principals and leading teaching and learning, and 4) the principal and leading the community. The survey and the interview were administered mainly to measure the Al Ain schools' principals understanding and perception on these four areas. The following discussion is presenting the findings from the surveys and interviews in the four areas.

1. The Principals and the Strategic Leadership

Table 1. Principals and the strategic leadership.

Table 1. Number of participants in each item and overall percentage of rating each item and each group											
Item No.	S D	D	U	A	S A	Total of participants	S D	D	U	A	S A
Standard 1. The principals and the strategic leadership											
1	0	0	0	13	27	40	0%	0%	0%	33%	68%
2	0	1	7	17	15	40	0%	3%	18%	43%	38%
3	28	6	4	0	2	40	70%	15%	10%	0%	5%
4	0	0	0	9	31	40	0%	0%	0%	23%	78%
5	3	0	0	9	28	40	8%	0%	0%	23%	70%
Standard 1. Overall Percentage							16%	4%	6%	26%	50%

The above table shows dissimilarity in responses toward the five statements in group 1.

Statement 1: *Principals must change first to challenge and motivate the rest of the institution.*

The response on statement 1 in the survey shows that the majorities of the principals (13 (33 %) principals agreed and 27 (68 %) principals strongly agreed) agreed and strongly agreed that principals must change

first to challenge and motivate the rest of the institution. Most of the previous literature review highlighted this reality. The leadership must change first to challenge and motivate the rest of the institution, speaking with one voice, and “walking the talk” to model desired behavior, Booz et al (2004).

Statement 2: *Principals should have absolute power to implement what works for the learners’ benefits.*

As a response on the second statement about the principals’ absolute power in schools, the biggest ratio is still in the agree and strongly agree area (17 principals agreed and 15 principals strongly agree while 7 principals were uncertain and 1 principal disagree). This means that some principals have reservations on giving absolute power to school principals. This also appeared in the answers of some principals in the interviews conducted by the researcher. According to Mrs. X some principals may misunderstand the term. Another principal commented: “ I have reservations on this point).

Statement 3: *Principals are not responsible for developing a school shared vision.*

Most of the principals agree on the fact that it is the school principal who is responsible for developing a shared vision for the school. Lunenburg (2006) stated that successful principals usually start with working with the school staff to create a shared vision and mission. Mr. Y, a cycle 1 principal in response to a question; “ Who is responsible for creating the school vision?” said that it is the responsibility of every school member. All the staff must participate in creating a shared vision for the school. He added.

Statement 4: *Principals should ensure that the strategic plan of the school is aligned to the district and national strategic plan.*

One of the most important issues that are prioritized by Abu Dhabi Education Council is that making sure that all the parties-schools, zones and ADEC itself work in the same direction and for the same goals. Abu Dhabi Emirate policy makers have set the 2030 economic strategic plan, from which ADEC had driven its educational strategic plan and schools must work in the same directions to prepare students in the Emirate to reach the designed goals. This is quite clear in the responses of the principals either in the survey or in the interview. 31 principals strongly agreed and 9 agreed on principals are responsible for aligning school strategic plans to that of the state.

Statement 5: *Successful principals start change with assessing the needs of all the stakeholders.*

In response to statement 5, 3 principals (8 %) agreed, none of the principals (0%) disagreed, were uncertain, 9 principals (23 %) agreed, and 28 principals (70 %) strongly agreed.

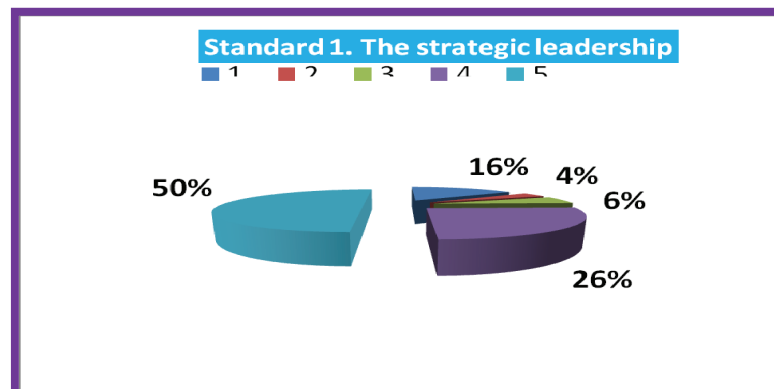


Figure 1. Overall percentage of strategic leading.

Overall, the statistics in Fig. 1 shows that the Al Ain public school principals demonstrated a reasonable understanding of their crucial role in the strategic leadership. 50 % of the principals strongly agreed on that role. Also, 26 % agree on the same concept. However, 6 % were uncertain, 4 % disagreed, and 16 % strongly disagreed.

2. The Principal and Leading the Organization

Table 2. Principals and leading the organization.

Table 2. Number of participants in each item and overall percentage of rating each item.											
Item No.	S D	D	U	A	S A	Total No. Of Participants	S D	D	U	A	S A
Standard II. The Principal and leading the organization											
6	2	0	0	2	36	40	5%	0%	0%	5%	90%
7	20	7	1	5	7	40	50%	18%	3%	13%	18%
8	0	0	2	19	19	40	0%	0%	5%	48%	48%
9	1	0	0	10	29	40	3%	0%	0%	25%	73%
10	28	6	0	2	4	40	70%	15%	0%	5%	10%
11	35	5	0	0	0	40	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%
12	20	7	1	5	7	40	50%	18%	3%	13%	18%
Standard 2. Overall Percentage →							36%	8%	1%	16%	40%

Statement 6: *For successful change, principals need to be aware of their roles and understand what is meant by change.*

38 participants (95 %) strongly agree on the fact that principals must understand their role in changes and what is meant by change. Only 2 participants disagree on principals should be aware of and understand change.

Statement 7: *There is no difference between a school manager and a school leader.*

While 27 participants (68 %) strongly disagree and disagree on statement 7 -there is no difference between school principal and a school leader, 12 of them (31 %) agree and strongly agree on the same statement.

Statement 8: *For effective change, developing a culture should be the first step.*

A big ratio of the participants (96 %) agreed and strongly agreed that building an organizational culture is of great importance for successful change. However, only 2 participants (5%) felt uncertain about the same point.

Statement 9: *Budgeting is not the business of the school principals.*

28 (71 %) principals strongly disagree and disagree on statement 9 and 20 % (8 principals) were uncertain about the same statement. However, 11% (4 participants) agreed and strongly disagreed.

Statement 10: *Safe and secure school environment is not the principal's responsibility.*

100 % of the surveyed principals strongly agreed and agreed on the 10th statement about safe and secure school environment. 0 % of the participants were uncertain or agreed and strongly agreed on the same statement.

Statement 11: *Ensuring that all the students receive effective teaching and learning is not the responsibility of the principal.*

Of the 40 surveyed principals, 21 (53%) and 7 (18 %) strongly disagreed and disagreed on the statement No. 11. In the same time, 8 principals (20%) were uncertain. 1 and 3 principals agreed and strongly agreed on the same statement.

Statement 12: *Understanding curriculum standards is the responsibility of teachers and not the principals.*

On this statement, 14 and 7 principals (35% and 18 %) strongly disagreed and disagreed, 7 principals (18 %) were uncertain, and 12 principals (30 %) agreed and strongly agreed.

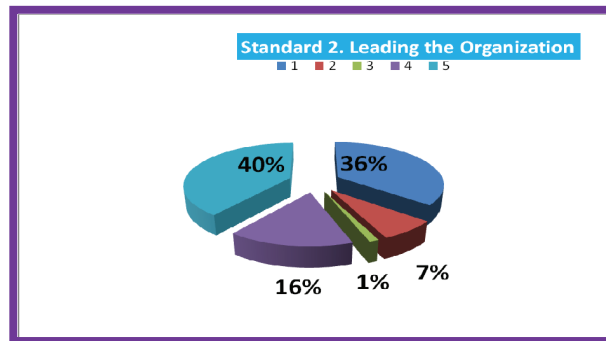


Figure 2. Overall percentage of leading the organization.

In general, 42 % and 14% (56 % all together) of Al Ain public schools principals strongly agreed and agreed on their significant role in leading the school as a whole organization. Meanwhile, 33 % and 9 % (42 % all together) of the principals strongly disagreed and disagreed on the same concept and 2 % of them were uncertain.

3. The Principals and Leading Teaching and Learning

Statement 13: *Principals have nothing to do with curriculum implementation in the classroom.*

As for statement No. 13, 18 and 7 principals (45 % and 18 %) strongly disagreed and disagreed, 7 principals (18 %) were uncertain, 8 principals (20 %) agreed and strongly agreed on the same idea.

Table 3. Principals and leading teaching and learning.

Table 3. Group III. The Principal and Leading Teaching And Learning											
Item No.	Rate .1	Rate .2	Rate .3	Rate .4	Rate .5	Total No. Of Participants	Rate. 1	Rate.2	Rate. 3	Rate.4	Rate. 5
Standard III. The Principal and Leading Teaching and Learning											
13	21	7	8	1	3	40	53%	18%	20%	3%	8%
14	14	7	7	6	6	40	35%	18%	18%	15%	15%
15	18	7	7	4	4	40	45%	18%	18%	10%	10%
16	23	10	3	1	3	40	58%	25%	8%	3%	8%
17	26	6	1	2	5	40	65%	15%	3%	5%	13%
18	10	9	9	8	4	40	25%	23%	23%	20%	10%
Standard 3. Overall Percentage							44%	20%	15%	10%	11%

Statement 14: *Principals should not model and lead teachers to the best teaching practices.*

Regarding item No. 14, 23 and 10 principals (58 % and 25%) strongly disagreed and disagreed, 3 principals (8 %) were uncertain, and 1 and 3 principals agreed and strongly agreed on modeling teachers in teaching and learning.

Statement 15: *School principals have nothing to do with the students assessments.*

12 and 9 principals (30 % and 23 %) strongly disagreed and disagreed, 6 principals (15 %) were uncertain, and 6 and 7 principals agreed and strongly agreed on their role in students' assessment.

Statement 16: *Curriculum development to meet the market needs is not the business of the principals.*

To some extent, there is a balance in the statement 16 responses. They ranged from 10 (25 %) people strongly disagreed, 9 (23 %) people disagreed, 9(23 %) people were uncertain, 8 (20 %) people agreed and 4 (10 %) people strongly agreed on the role of principals in curriculum.

Statement 17: *Principals should not delegate responsibilities and tasks to the others.*

Statement 17 showed different responses statistics from those in statement 16. 26 participants (65 %) strongly disagreed, 6 participants (15 %) disagreed, one participant (3 %), 2 participants agreed, and (13 %) strongly disagreed.

Statement 18: *School principals lead, facilitate, and actively participate in continual professional development programs.*

Only one person (3 %) strongly disagreed, none (0 %) disagreed or was uncertain, 10 persons (25 %) agreed, and 29 persons (73 %) strongly agreed on statement 18.

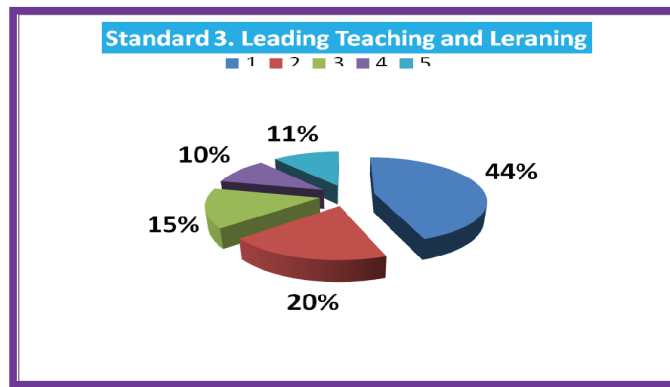


Figure 3. Overall percentage of leading teaching and learning.

Taken as a whole, the statistics on group 3 items showed that 44 % and 20 % (60 % all together) of the principals disagreed on the important role of principals in teaching and learning, 16 % of them were uncertain, and 21 % (including agreed and strongly agreed together) agreed on the same standard.

4. The Principals and Leading the Community

Table 4. Principals and Leading the Community.

Number of participants in each item and overall percentage of rating each item												
Item No.	Rate.1	Rate.2	Rate.3	Rate.4	Rate.5	Total No. Of Participants	Rate.1	Rate.2	Rate.3	Rate.4	Rate.5	
Group IV. The Principal and Leading the Community												
19	1	0	0	9	30	40	3%	0%	0%	23%	75%	
20	3	0	0	12	25	40	8%	0%	0%	30%	63%	
Standard 4. Overall percentage →							5%	0%	0%	26%	69%	

Statement 19: *Successful principals always involve parents in supporting the school.*

There was only one principal (3 %) who strongly disagreed, 9 principals (23 %) agreed, and 30 principals (75 %) strongly disagreed on parents’ involvement in school processes.

Statement 20: *Principals should communicate the school strategic plan inside and not outside the school.*

Part of the principals’ responsibility is to work with transparency and accountability. This requires him/her to communicate the school strategic plan with the inside and the outside communities. However, it is quite clear that the principals in Al Ain schools understand this issue well. As 37 principals agreed and strongly agreed that principals must communicate the school plans in and outside the school.

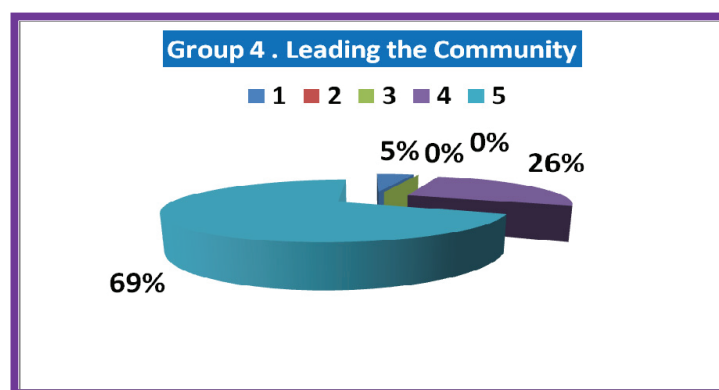


Figure 4. Overall percentage of leading the community.

On the whole, the statistics on standard 4 (principals and leading the community) showed that 47 % of the principals strongly agreed, 21 % agreed, 5 % were uncertain, 7 % disagreed, and 20 % strongly disagreed on the role of school principals in leading the community.

Summary

As for the first standard, *the principal and leading strategically*, in general, the principals demonstrated well understanding of the necessity to change first in order to be able to lead change, the significance to ensure that the school strategic plan is aligned with that of the district and the national, and the they well understand the need to assess the needs before leading change. Still they are uncertain about whether they should have absolute power to implement what works for the learners, from their point of views and the responsibility of developing a school shared vision.

Regarding the second standard, *the principal and leading the organization*, the statistics showed that they well understand that they should be aware of their roles in change, develop organizational culture and that their responsibility to ensure safe and secure environment. But they showed less understanding towards their role in budgeting, the difference between a school manger and a school leader, and delegating tasks to others.

Concerning the third standard, *the principal and leading teaching and learning*, there is a divergence of views in the principals' responses. These differences will be discussed carefully in the discussion section.

As for the fourth standard, *the principals and leading the community*, a big number of the principals showed understanding of communicating the school plans inside and outside the school and involving parents in supporting school. On the other side, still some principals need to understand the relation between the market needs and the curriculum development.

Conclusion

The researcher initiated the study regarding the issue of "the roles of educational leaders in inducing change" and came up with a variety of results. The participants took different attitudes towards the roles of educational leaders in inducing change. Some of them demonstrated positive attitudes towards some standards especially those related to the strategic and the community leadership. However, it was found out that those participants showed negative attitudes towards other standards such as leading the organization and leading teaching and learning.

Those who estimated the significance of roles of the educational leaders understand their roles and responsibilities in articulating a vision for learning within their schools and create an environment that

allows all the employees to share a vision, establish a mission, and develop values and goals. They demonstrated well understanding of crucial issues related to strategic leadership such as creating a school shared vision and mission, aligning the school strategic/improvement plan with that of the district and state, and setting school goals and objectives. This corresponds with many previous studies such as DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hord, 2003; Huffman & Hipp, 2003; Martin-Kniep, 2003; Norris et al., 2002; Roberts & Pruit, 2003; Senge, 1990,2001; and Wald & Castleberry, 2000. They all gave great priorities to the educational strategic leadership.

Similarly, the same attitudes were taken towards leading the community. The participants showed a reasonable understanding of the community involvement in the school plans. They also focused on the need of parents support to school.

On the other hand, the study revealed an important reality related to understanding two of the four standards, i.e. *leading the organization and leading teaching and learning*. Although the participants (as educational leaders) showed some understanding of leading the organization and leading teaching and learning, they still need more understanding in these two areas, notably the issues of curriculum implementation and students assessment in *leading teaching and learning* and professional development and budget management in *leading the organization*. Of course, this contradicts with Mark Hadfield (2003) who focuses on building capacity for whole school improvement involving and bringing together four core components: resources, structures, culture, and the skills of staff.

Briefly, the researcher came up with two main findings in the conclusion of this study:

The educational leaders in Abu Dhabi schools are on the right track. They have already initiated true steps towards change. However, they still need time to tackle all the educational leadership components which is not, with all means, an easy task.

Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) is leading the education reform in a very proper way, yet still more programs needed to be developed especially those related to the implementation of ADEC's strategic plans as the study revealed that the gap is in the practice.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researcher proposes a set of recommendations to be considered by change designers. These recommendations can be listed as follows:

1. Educational leaders need to fully understand what is meant by change in a wider concept.
2. Educational leaders need to know more about their job descriptions, responsibilities, and professional standards.
3. More training programs should be designed to bridge the gap between policies and implementations.
4. Educational leaders need to be given enough time to implement what they learn about change.
5. Education policy makers need to ensure the alignment between what is being implemented and what has been designed.
6. Leading teaching and learning area needs more efforts to be well understood and tackled by educational leaders.
7. Also, leading the organization area needs more focus.
8. The English language should be more focused on as it is the medium of change.
9. Educational leaders must be given the opportunity to participate in decision making.
10. Contiguous assessment to change phases needs to be considered
11. More involvement of all the stakeholders-parents, teachers, students, and others.
12. More authorities should be given to educational leaders to lead the change in the way they see is suitable and beneficial for the organization and individual.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Questionnaire

<p>Dear participants,</p> <p>Kindly rate the following statement and be sure that your responses will stay confidential and anonymous.</p>						
	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
<p>Standard I. The Principal and Strategic Leadership</p>						
	Principals must change first to challenge and motivate the rest of the institution.					
	Principals should have absolute power to implement what works for the learners' benefits.					
	Principals are not responsible for developing a school shared vision.					
	Principals should ensure that the strategic plan of the school is aligned to the district and national strategic plan.					
	Successful principals start change with assessing the needs of all the stakeholders					
<p>Standard II. The Principal and leading the organization</p>						
	For successful change, principals need to be aware of their roles and understand what is meant by change.					
	There is no difference between a school manager and a school leader.					
	For effective change, developing a culture should be the first step.					
	School principals lead, facilitate and actively participate in continual professional development programs.					

	Budgeting is not the business of the school principals.					
	Safe and secure school environment is not the principal's responsibility.					
Standard III. The Principal and Leading Teaching And Learning						
	Ensuring that all the students receive effective teaching and learning is not the responsibility of the principal.					
	Understanding curriculum standards is the responsibility of teachers and not the principals.					
	Principals have nothing to do with curriculum implementation in the classroom.					
	Principals should not model and lead teachers to the best teaching practices.					
	Principals should not delegate responsibilities and tasks to the others.					
	Curriculum development to the market needs is not the business of the principals.					
	School principals have nothing to do with the students assessments.					
Standard IV. The Principal and leading the community						
	Successful principals always involve parents in supporting the school.					
	Principals should communicate the school strategic plan inside and not outside the school.					